



SECRETARÍA DE AGRICULTURA, GANADERÍA,
DESARROLLO RURAL, PESCA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

AGRICULTURAL OFFICE

EMBASSY OF MEXICO

Washington, D.C., July 24, 2006

LLOYD DAY
ADMINISTRATOR
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
USDA

Standardization Section
Fresh Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetables Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1450 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 1661 South Building, Stop 0240
Washington, DC 20250-0240

Re: Comments on Proposed Revision to U.S. Standards for Grades of Greenhouse Tomatoes

Dear Mr. Day:

The Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food ("SAGARPA") of the Government of Mexico hereby wishes to provide its comments on proposed revisions to the United States standards for grades of greenhouse tomatoes. These proposed revisions were published in the *Federal Register* of May 31, 2006 (71 *Fed. Reg.* 30860).

Initially, SAGARPA would like to express support for the efforts of USDA to modify U.S. standards for grades of greenhouse tomatoes in order to bring them into line with current practices, and to improve the efficiency and usefulness of inspections. While supporting this effort to revise these standards, SAGARPA does have the following comments with respect to the proposed revisions published in the *Federal Register*:

1. SAGARPA agrees with USDA's use of existing size standards for field tomatoes or greenhouse tomatoes. SAGARPA also supports the option of continuing to use count size outside of the grade standard for market segments which prefer size over grade standards. SAGARPA agrees that a uniform pack should have no more than 10% of the tomatoes vary by one-half inch.
2. SAGARPA supports the creation of a separate standard for tomatoes on the vine.
3. SAGARPA supports the proposed standard for skin check. However, SAGARPA would also suggest that the skin check standard also include "russetting". While imperfections caused by russetting do not reach the proposed definitions of either growth cracks or scars, they do effect the marketability and value of tomatoes.



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4. SAGARPA supports the inclusion of moldy stems as a defect, but believes they should be considered a defect only when there is a large growth of mold that leaves behind a soft area after it is wiped off of the fruit. SAGARPA does not believe in the mere presence of a dot of mold should cause a fruit to be considered moldy.

SAGARPA appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments on these proposed revisions to the Grading Standard for Greenhouse Tomatoes.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

CARLOS VAZQUEZ O.
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS